Behavioral Health Administration
Aliya Jones, M.D., MBA
Deputy Secretary/Executive Director
55 Wade Ave., Dix Bldg., SGHC
Catonsville, MD 21228

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Dear Maryland Behavioral Health Providers & Stakeholder Community:

We are writing today to share Maryland-specific updates and guidance about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

To date, there have been no laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 identified in Maryland. Six Maryland residents have been tested for the Novel Coronavirus. Five results came back negative and one is still pending (as of Mar. 2).

Please note: This is a rapidly evolving situation. Visit the MDH and CDC websites frequently for the most updated information.

For up-to-date information and resources about COVID-19 in Maryland, visit https://health.maryland.gov/coronavirus.

Updated data on U.S. and global cases can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/

Please read and share these additional resources:

- Frequently Asked Questions - February 28, 2020
- Maryland Department of Health releases public service announcements amid statewide preparedness efforts for COVID-19 - March 2,2020
- Gov. Hogan announces additional steps to protect Marylanders from coronavirus

The following includes information for clinicians and providers:

Updated CDC Guidance on Criteria to Guide Evaluation of Patients Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19

The CDC issued updated criteria for PUI (updated Feb. 27), which are available online at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html and as follows:

Clinical Features	and	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)	and	Any person, including health care workers, who has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization	and	A history of travel from affected geographic areas (see below) within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza)	and	No source of exposure has been identified

Immediately report to your local health department any patients who meet criteria for a PUI for COVID-19, or any patient for whom clinical presentation or exposure history is equivocal. If you are unable to immediately reach your local health department, notify the Maryland Department of Health at 410-767-6700 during working hours or at 410-795-7365 after working hours.

Specimen collection and testing
If the health department approves testing for COVID-19 for a patient, the specimens that will be requested will be:
- Two nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport media
- Lower respiratory specimen (e.g. sputum)
- Serum

This list of requested specimens is subject to change, and the health department will provide detailed guidance on a case by case basis when testing is approved. At this time, all testing for COVID-19 is being performed at CDC. If testing is approved, the health department will

coordinate with health care providers to arrange transport of specimens first to the MDH laboratory, who will ship the specimen to CDC.

Infection Prevention and Control Guidance

CDC guidelines for infection prevention and control recommendations for Novel Coronavirus are online at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html. Please carefully review these.

Key recommendations include:

- When scheduling appointments, instruct patients and persons who accompany them to call ahead or inform healthcare personnel upon arrival if they have symptoms of any respiratory infection and to take appropriate preventive actions (e.g., wear a facemask upon entry to contain cough, follow triage procedures).
- Implement triage procedures to detect PUI for COVID-19 during or before patient triage or registration. Ensure that all patients are asked about the presence of symptoms of a respiratory infection and history of travel to China.
- Ask all PUI for COVID-19 to wear a surgical mask as soon as they are identified.
- Evaluate all PUI in a private room with the door closed, ideally an airborne infection isolation room if available.
- Health care providers entering the room of a PUI should use standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions and eye protection.
  https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html

PUIs in Outpatient Settings

If a patient being seen in an outpatient setting meets criteria for PUI, please contact your local health department immediately, who will help with the determination for testing, and next steps. Unless there is a medical requirement for the patient to be transferred to an emergency department, the patient should remain in the outpatient setting until the health department has been contacted and a plan for next steps has been determined. As this assessment process occurs, if an airborne isolation room is unavailable, ensure that the patient is in a private room with the door closed, and ask that the patient continue to wear a surgical mask if tolerated.
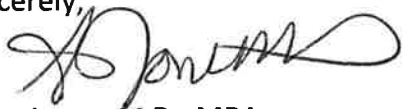
Clinical Guidance

CDC has also recently issued updated clinical guidance on Novel Coronavirus, including information about clinical presentation and course, and radiographic findings:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html

Thank you for your attention to this rapidly evolving situation.

If you have questions, please contact your local health department. If you are unable to immediately reach your local health department, call the Maryland Department of Health at 410-767-6700 during working hours or at 410-795-7365 after working hours.

Sincerely,

Aliya Jones, M.D., MBA
Deputy Secretary